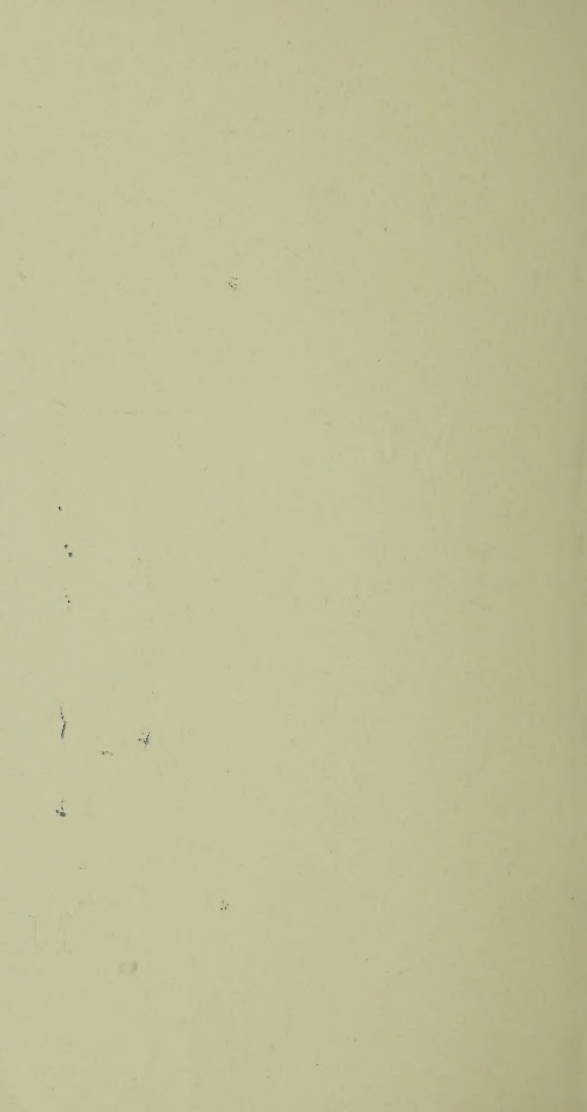




India.  
**Seventy-fifth**  
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**Series**

*Griswold.*

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# INDIA AWAKENING

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It goes without saying that in the supreme matter of the soul's turning unto God there is no form of experience which may be regarded as alone typical and normative. People differ so in temperament, education, inherited ideas, and habits of thought and life that every one who finds Christ finds Him in his own way. The law, then, is not the identity, but rather "the variety of religious experience." Of course, there is identity in the sense that all true conversion involves "repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." But in the details of the great experience every man is a law unto himself, because every man represents an original and unique product.

This principle of the "variety" of Christian experience holds not only of individuals, but also of *groups*. The Great Commission is to preach the gospel to the whole creation; but the whole creation to be evangelized consists not only of individuals, but also of individuals gathered into social and political groups; that is, into families, clans, castes, races, nations. Each group is stamped with its own peculiar characteristics, and hence tends to react intellectually, emotionally, and practically, in its own characteristic way. Now we are to disciple the *nations* (Matt. xxviii:19). But each nation is sure to respond to the truth, so far as it responds, in its own way. Which means simply that the problem of missions is psychological and sociological as well as religious.

To illustrate: (1) Followers of a low form of religions are in general more prompt to accept the religion of Jesus Christ than followers of a higher form. For example, the Karens of Burma, the Koreans, the South Sea Islanders, and the "Untouchables" of India, as compared with the adherents of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. Crude religions, such as the various forms of Animism and devil-worship, usually offer a comparatively

short resistance to the faith of Christ; (2) the instances cited above illustrate the principle that "the good is the enemy of the best." The more good there is in a religion, the greater in general will be its resistance to the best religion. Thus Hinduism and Buddhism, Judaism and Islam contain more truth and consequently have more resisting power than the devil-worshipping religions of fear. (3) Where individual liberty prevails and individual initiative is the rule, as in Europe and America, and to a considerable degree also in China, Japan and Korea, men come out *one by one* and enter the Christian Church; but wherever individualism has not yet come to its rights, as in the caste-bound organizations of India, people will move *in masses*, if at all. Individual initiative will be the exception. Mass movement will be the rule. All of which means that the story of the Conversion of India, as written by the future historian, will differ widely in detail from the story of the conversion of other nations.

The outstanding fact of the present situation in India is indicated by the formula—*India Awakening*. It is neither India asleep, nor India awake, but the transition from the one to the other, *India Awakening*. It is an awakening *from, through, and unto*. India is in process of awakening from her age-long sleep of ignorance, superstition, and incapacity. Last summer in a remote valley of the Himalayas I had the opportunity of intimate acquaintance with two Kashmiri Brahmans. One was a man of the old school, very learned in Sanskrit, but very ignorant of all else, very superstitious, and in practical things very incapable. The other was a man of the new type, who had been a pupil in the Mission School, Srinagar, knew English fairly well, cherished liberal ideas on many things, and was the government official in the place. He was not a Christian yet, but in his outlook and efficiency he differed *toto coelo* from the

other. The one represented in himself India asleep; the other, India awakening.

Now a sleeper may be awakened in many ways—by the call of a friend, by an alarm-clock, by the light of the dawn, by any or all of these. In like manner the awakening of India is taking place through the multitudinous forces of enlightenment which, like a river, are pouring through the length and breadth of the land, *e.g.*, the vast order and system of the British administration, the many-sided activity of Christian Missions, education through schools and colleges, railways and telegraphs, books and newspapers, foreign study and travel. Another illustration from Kashmir: Last summer we dined with several Kashmiri Brahmans, old students of ours, who had studied and travelled in England. They were polished men of the world, and occupied important government posts. The negative and destructive work of emancipation from the provincialism, ignorance and superstition of the past had thoroughly taken place. In accent and manner and breadth of view they showed the influence of foreign travel and study. One of them had sent his only son, a boy of ten or twelve, off to England and placed him in a Wesleyan school noted for its high religious tone, in order that the lad might escape from being contaminated and spoiled by the influence of relatives. This is a straw showing the direction of the wind. The father and mother were not Christians, but they placed their boy in an environment where his becoming a Christian would be almost a matter of course. Instead of the father shall be the children. If the fathers must needs perish in the wilderness, there is hope that the children may enter the promised land.

Too much significance must not be ascribed to the matter of inter-dining. Caste rules are adjusting themselves to the necessities of modern life, and especially to the necessities of the educated. Some of the leading Hindus



of North India, Brahmans by caste, frequently dine with their Muhammadan and Christian friends—in *private*. It is doubtless generally known, but the practice is winked at. No Hindu is necessarily nearer the Kingdom of God, because he dines with one. It is possible that the rules concerning inter-dining and even inter-marriage may be greatly modified without in any way destroying the force of caste as a great obstacle in the way of the open confession of Christ. Even now, especially among the educated, inter-dining is a venial sin, whereas the confession of Christ through baptism is a mortal sin.

But, thirdly, the awakening of India is not only an awakening *from* the ignorance and lethargy of the past, *through* the multitudinous forces of enlightenment which are acting upon India in the present; it is also an awakening *to* a new consciousness, a new sense of need for the future. It is an awakening to a consciousness of many needs—intellectual, social, political, industrial, moral, religious. To illustrate the intellectual awakening: In 1849 Dr. C. W. Forman began the work of Christian education in Lahore. The first boys who attended school were induced to come by the gift to each of a small coin daily. So slight was the consciousness of intellectual need at that time. The growth since then in the desire for education may be measured by the fact that in the same city of Lahore at the last admission to the Forman Christian College the pressure of students clamoring to be admitted was so great that scores and scores had to be turned away for lack of room. But the children of newly baptized Christians from the low castes are in very much the same condition as the high-caste boys were in 1849, whom Dr. Forman had to hire to come to school. Their desire for education is weak and uncertain. In connection with the Hiramandi Church in Lahore City, a church made up entirely of low-caste converts, there is a boys' school under the care of Mr. McKee. Not

long since the boys of this school struck and sent word to Mr. McKee that they would come back if he would give them a treat of candy and sweets. Such conduct is no ground for discouragement. It only means that the pupils of the Hiramandi School, as well as their parents, are only slightly awake to the benefits of education. But so were the high-caste boys and their parents a half century ago.

The political awakening of India may be summed up in the recent agitation for political rights, which has resulted first in Lord Morley's *Councils Bill* providing for Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils in India; and, secondly, in the declaration of the King-Emperor at the Delhi Durbar, Dec. 12, 1911, annulling the Partition of Bengal, the exciting cause of the recent unrest, and transferring the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi.

Industrial development is sorely needed in India. Its population is too exclusively agricultural, and consequently has to import too much from abroad. The consciousness of the need of industrial education is increasing in India day by day. In this as in all other departments of progress Christian Missions have made large contributions, and are likely to make still larger contributions in the future. The Allahabad Christian College, through its technical and agricultural departments, may be expected to play an important part in this development.

In many respects the most significant form of awakening in India is the social awakening on the part of the depressed classes or "Untouchables." There are over 50,000,000 of these people in India, and they are largely accessible to the gospel to-day. Already hundreds of thousands from the ranks of the "Untouchables" have been received into the Christian Church, and from among them powerful preachers of the gospel have been raised up; for example, Rev. Labhu Mall and Rev. Mallu Chand of the United Presbyterian Mission in the Punjab. It used to be thought that the

Christian Church by receiving outcastes and "untouchables" into its communion would condemn itself to be permanently a church only for the low castes. But the real result has been entirely different. If some have scoffed at the Christian Church on this account and have called her the church of the outcaste and the "untouchable" even as the Pharisees called Christ "the friend of publicans and sinners," yet others—and among them many men of light and leading in the Hindu community—have acknowledged this as the glory of the Christian Church. Perhaps the greatest apologetic in India to-day for the truth of Christianity is the zeal of the Christian Church for the salvation of the very lowest. And this new and revised estimate of the value of the work of the Christian Church for the outcaste and "untouchable" reveals at the same time a new consciousness of the sacredness of human life and a new power of moral and spiritual evolution. It indicates that many who are still within the ranks of Hinduism are not far from the Kingdom of God.

The full magnitude of the task which the Christian Church has undertaken in India at the command of her Divine Lord may be estimated from the following facts and statistics:

1. The population of India, Burma and Ceylon, according to the census of 1911, is 316,019,846, of which 3,876,000 are Christians. In spite of the terrible ravages of plague, the numbers have increased by 20,000,000 during the last decade. The increase of the total population has been 6.4 per cent.; that of the Christians, 11.6 per cent. India is one of the three congested areas of the earth's surface, China and Europe being the other two. India's population is about one-fifth of the human race. How great the task of the Church in India, as estimated by the numbers to be won!

2. Three great races constitute the basis of India's population: the Dravidian, Aryan and



Mongolian. The Aryans have contributed their civilization and religion, and have impressed upon Hindu society its characteristic organization of caste, a social system unique in the history of the world for its power of resisting disintegration and preventing the growth of individualism. Nearly twenty years ago I said to my language teacher: "Pandit, what would take place in India if caste did not exist?" He answered without hesitation, as if voicing a foregone conclusion: "The people would all become Christians." How great, then, is the task of the Church in India as estimated by the magnitude of the obstacle of caste!

3. The illiteracy of India is terrible. It may be contrasted with that of America, where 90 per cent. are literate and 10 per cent. are illiterate. But in India the figures have to be reversed. There 10 per cent. are literate (a most liberal estimate), and 90 per cent. illiterate. How great the task of the Church in India as estimated by the illiteracy to be met and overcome! The one hopeful thing in the situation is that the illiteracy is slowly but steadily decreasing. Mr. Gokhale's *Education Bill*, if it has become a law, as reported, will provide for a universal scheme of popular education and will inaugurate a new era for India.

4. Three great religions are contending with Christianity for the prize of the Indian Empire, namely, Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism. In other non-Christian countries either Islam alone or Buddhism alone is the chief antagonist of Christianity, but in the Indian Empire Christianity is confronted by the serried ranks of the three strongest non-Christian religions of the world. How great, then, is the task of the Church in India as estimated by the number and strength of her adversaries! It looks as if there would be fought out on the soil of India the supreme battle of the ages.

What has the Christian Church been able to accomplish in the face of these odds?

1. It has gradually built up a Christian community of 3,876,000 souls, and during the last decade the percentage of the Christian increase has been nearly twice that of the general increase. The Christian growth is from three sources: First, the natural increase of the Christian community itself; secondly, admissions from the "depressed classes" or "untouchables," frequently in such large numbers as to merit the name of "mass movements"; and, thirdly, admissions relatively few and sporadic from the ranks of Hindus, Muhammadans and Buddhists.

2. This analysis of the Christian increase indicates the threefold nature of Christian work in India. It is first, work for the Christians themselves through *churches*, Sunday-schools, C. E. Societies, prayer meetings, schools, colleges, theological seminaries, conventions, special services, missionary societies, Christian literature, etc. The organized Church is the true centre of effort and the real basis for India's evangelization. Christian work in India is, secondly, work among the *accessible classes*, which consists in the baptism and teaching of low-caste converts. It is, thirdly, preparatory work for the classes not yet specially accessible, namely, Hindus, Muhammadans and Buddhists, a work which consists in teaching and (in some cases) in baptizing and further training.

3. Inside the Indian Church movements big with promise have recently taken place. Many congregations, schools and conventions have been visited with revival, and the result has been a new sense of the holiness of God and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The forces of indigenous Protestantism in India have been organized into the Indian Missionary Society, a movement prophetic of further unity. Most of the Presbyterian churches in India have united into the Indian Presbyterian Church, and besides this negotiations are on

foot for a large federation of Christian bodies. The revival referred to above touched the Church alone. The next great revival in India may be expected to touch multitudes who have received their education in Christian schools and colleges, and so are more or less prepared for the mighty working of God's Spirit. The aim of all work for the 3,876,000 Christians is to make them a living and efficient evangelistic instrument.

4. The Christian Church in India, besides caring for the members of her own household, is also ministering to two large and strongly contrasted communities outside the Church. She is baptizing and (more slowly) teaching the "untouchables," of whom there are more than 50,000,000. She is also teaching and (more slowly) baptizing Hindus, Muhammadans and Buddhists, of whom there are at least 250,000,000 in the Indian Empire. It is easy to baptize, but hard to teach, a low-caste man. It is easy to teach, but hard to baptize, a high-caste man, or, indeed, a member of any of the strong non-Christian faiths. As Mr. Sherwood Eddy says, "this is the day of seed-sowing among the Brahmans and of reaping among the outcastes" (*India Awakening*, p. 123). The aim of work among the low-caste people is to teach, baptize, train and assimilate as rapidly as possible. Splendid work of this kind has been done in the Farrakhabad, Etah and Etawah Districts of the North India Mission, as well as in many places in the Punjab Mission.

5. What is the aim and significance of Christian instruction given to non-Christians? By a kind of instinct the various missions working in India have through good report and evil report kept at school work for non-Christian boys and girls until a vast number have been educated in mission schools. "One-third of the education in colleges is in Christian hands. There are also 11,500 primary schools with 361,000 scholars under missionary control" (Sherwood Eddy, *op cit.*, p. 115).

Through Christian instruction the Christian Church in India has made a large and vitally important contribution to the awakening of India. There has been, it is true, much sowing and comparatively little reaping (as yet). But the sowing is done in faith and hope, and the time of reaping may be nearer than we think. It may be that the various castes and communities of India will become accessible one by one, and that India's conversion to the religion of Christ will be by communities, even as the conversion of the aborigines of India to Hinduism was and is by communities. At any rate, the ultimate justification of Christian education for non-Christians will be in its fruits.

Christian generalship is needed, and the categories of war should be applied. Sherman's March to the Sea was more enthusiastic work than Grant's Siege of Vicksburg. Nevertheless, both were necessary. The reception and training of multitudes of converts from the outcastes is more inspiring work, perhaps, than the steady siege-work of Christian instruction given to non-Christians. But, again, it may be affirmed that both are necessary, in order of the conquest of India for Jesus Christ.

6. The American Presbyterian Church has three missions in India, the statistics of which for 1910-1911 are as follows:

Churches .....	57
Ordained native preachers.....	61
Communicants .....	8,764
Added during year.....	1,717
No. of Sunday-school scholars.....	10,535
No. of schools .....	266
No. of colleges .....	2
No. in boarding and day schools..	10,973
Income on the field.....	\$82,284

What, then, is the Christian outlook in India?

It is partly conditioned by the fact that India is a birthplace of religions. She has produced faiths which have affected the life of



over one-third of mankind. Buddhism was the first missionary religion in the world's history. The productive period of India as a mother of religions may possibly not yet be over. There is still an intense desire on the part of every outstanding religious personality in India to found a new religion, or at least to manifest religious leadership. As illustrations may be mentioned Pandit Agnihotri, founder of the atheistic *Der Samaj*, and Pandit Mangal Der, founder of the *Satyugi Mandal*. The point of view of every newly founded sect or religion is universalistic, i.e., its gospel is regarded as intended for the whole of mankind. The religious teachers of India have not lost their persuasiveness, their power to stir the imagination, and create a following. It is sufficient to cite the examples of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Tirath Ram, and to refer to an article in the March (1912) number of the *Missionary Review of the World*, entitled, "*The Heathen Invasion of America.*"

There have been in the history of the world two birthplaces or creative centres of religion: Palestine-Arabia and India. Hebraism emerged from the Arabian desert. Jehovah's earliest seat was at Sinai. St. Paul retired to Arabia for meditation. But the early Church neglected Arabia. She found the desert tribes on the south a hard missionary field perhaps. By and by the nemesis came. Arabia, which ages before had brought forth Hebraism, teemed a second time and brought forth Islam. And the desert tribes of Arabia which the Eastern Church found it inconvenient to evangelize crushed the Eastern Church. Which things are a parable and a warning.

We must not think, then, that by some inevitable tendency India will become Christian as a matter of course. India's past history has been a record of brilliant prospects and of blighted hopes. Some of the hymns of the Rig Veda gave promise of an ethical monotheism almost as high and pure as that of the Old

Testament prophets. But the vision of God soon passed and the penitential note as sounded in the hymns to Varuna was heard no more. Buddhism seemed on the point of conquering the whole of India; but Buddhism lost its vigor, was vanquished by the forces of the Hindu Revival, and was finally expelled from the land of its birth. Only on one condition has the Christian Church a right to anticipate the conversion of India as the "divine event" toward which the whole course of India's ancient history and modern awakening moves—only on this condition that she prove herself a valiant worker together with God by the Christlike character of her sacrifices and the unfainting fervency of her prayers.

The work is still largely preparatory in India. There has been as yet no adequate return for all the men and women who have laid down their lives in India and for all the treasure which has been expended there. The story of the "Lone Star Mission" is familiar to all, how that more than once it was threatened with abandonment because of its unfruitfulness. But the time of reaping came at last, and now this same mission among the Telugus numbers over 150,000 persons in its Christian community. In some respects India as a whole may be called the "Lone Star Mission" of the Christian Church. But there is every reason for the belief that the comparative unfruitfulness of the early stages of Christian work in India is due only to the special character of the soil, requiring an unusually long time for sowing and tillage. The future of India is as bright as the promises of God. And so to all who support the work in India by their gifts and prayers as well as to all who labor there for the spread of the gospel there comes the apostolic word of command and promise: "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."



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